

IN THE CLAIMS

1-31. (canceled)

32. (previously presented) A broadcast-program selection history information acquisition apparatus operable in a system including a multiplicity of said broadcast-program selection history information acquisition apparatuses and a notification destination, said broadcast-program selection history information acquisition apparatus comprising:

storage means operable to store selection information regarding the selection of broadcast programs at predetermined acquisition times from among programs broadcast on a plurality of channels; and

transmission means operable to periodically transmit selection history information to the notification station at a transmission timing assigned at random in accordance with an intrinsic random number, and not in response to a data transfer request received from a device external to said broadcast-program selection history information acquisition apparatus, said selection history information including a plurality of pieces of said selection information stored at a plurality of said acquisition times, said transmission timing being assigned within a predetermined restricted range of hours beginning at a predetermined time of day in which said multiplicity of said broadcast-program selection history information acquisition apparatuses are restricted to transmit.

33. (currently amended) A broadcast-program selection history information acquisition apparatus, comprising:

storage means operable to store selection information regarding the selection of broadcast programs at predetermined acquisition times from among programs broadcast on a plurality of channels;

transmission timing assignment means operable to generate a random number and to assign a transmission timing corresponding

| to the random number based on a telephone number assigned to said telephone line; and

transmission means operable to transmit selection history information including a plurality of pieces of said selection information stored at a plurality of said acquisition times through a predetermined telephone line to a notification destination at said transmission timing.

34. (canceled)

35. (canceled)

36. (previously presented) The broadcast-program selection history information acquisition apparatus according to claim 32, wherein said selection history information includes channel number information regarding said selected broadcast programs and time information showing the time when said broadcast programs are selected.

37. (previously presented) The broadcast-program selection history information acquisition apparatus according to claim 32, wherein said selection history information includes an identification number intrinsically assigned to said broadcast-program selection history information acquisition apparatus.

38. (previously presented) The broadcast-program selection history information acquisition apparatus according to claim 32, wherein said transmission means is operable to transmit said selection history information through a predetermined line, and said broadcast-program selection history information acquisition apparatus is operable to change at least one of a setting for said predetermined acquisition times and a setting for said transmission timing based on a change command transmitted from said notification destination through said line.

39. (canceled)

40. (previously presented) A method of acquiring selection history information, comprising the steps of:

providing a multiplicity of broadcast-program selection history information acquisition apparatuses;

storing selection information regarding the selection of broadcast programs at predetermined acquisition times by said apparatuses from among programs broadcast on a plurality of channels; and

periodically transmitting selection history information from said apparatuses to a notification destination at transmission timings assigned at random in accordance with an intrinsic random number within a predetermined restricted range of hours beginning at a predetermined time of day, said selection history information including a plurality of pieces of said selection information stored at a plurality of said acquisition times, said transmitting performed not in response to a data transfer request from a device requesting to receive said selection history information.

41. (currently amended) A method of acquiring selection history information comprising the steps of:

storing selection information regarding the selection of broadcast programs at predetermined acquisition times from among programs broadcast on a plurality of channels; and

transmitting selection history information including a plurality of pieces of said selection information stored at a plurality of said acquisition times through a predetermined telephone line at an intrinsic transmission timing, said transmission timing being assigned by a device performing said transmitting by generating a random number and assigning said transmission timing corresponding to said random number based on a telephone number assigned to said predetermined telephone line.

42. (canceled)

43. (previously presented) The method according to claim 40, wherein said selection history information includes channel number information regarding said selected broadcast programs and time information showing the times when said broadcast programs are selected.

44. (previously presented) The method according to claim 40, wherein said selection history information includes an identification number intrinsically assigned to a particular one of said broadcast-program selection history information acquisition apparatuses.

45. (previously presented) The method according to claim 40, wherein said selection history information is transmitted to said notification destination through a predetermined line, said method further comprising changing at least one of a setting for said predetermined acquisition times and a setting for said transmission timing based on a change command received from said notification destination through said line.

46. (canceled)

47. (previously presented) Apparatus for use in acquiring broadcast-program selection history information, the apparatus comprising:

- a front end section operable to select a broadcast program from among programs broadcast on a plurality of channels in accordance with a selection input provided by a user;

- a memory operable to store selection information associated with the selected broadcast program;

- a random number generator operable to generate a random number; and

- a transmitter operable to transmit a signal representative of audience rating data based on the stored selection

information to a notification destination at a transmission timing assigned at random in accordance with said random number, and not in response to a data transfer request from a device external to said apparatus, said transmission timing being assigned within a predetermined restricted range of hours beginning at a predetermined time of day.

48. (previously presented) A broadcast-program selection history information acquisition apparatus according to claim 32, wherein said transmission means is operable to transmit a header when transmitting said selection history information, said header including an identification number, said identification number including a telephone number belonging to a user of said apparatus.

49. (previously presented) The method according to claim 40, further comprising transmitting a header when transmitting said selection history information, said header including an identification number, said identification number including a telephone number belonging to a user of said apparatus.

50. (previously presented) An apparatus according to claim 47, wherein said transmitter is operable to transmit a header when transmitting the signal, said header including an identification number, said identification number including a telephone number belonging to a user of said apparatus.

51. (currently amended) A broadcast-program selection history information acquisition apparatus comprising:

- a storage unit operable to store selection information regarding the selection of broadcast programs at respective acquisition times from among programs broadcast on a plurality of channels;

- a transmitter operable to transmit selection history information including a plurality of pieces of said selection information stored at a plurality of said acquisition times to a

notification destination at a predetermined transmission timing;
and

a processor operable to cause said selection information to be stored in said storage unit, to cause said selection history information to be transmitted by said transmitter, and to require authorizing input from a user upon each restoration of power to said broadcast-program selection history information acquisition apparatus after a loss of power thereto, ~~prior to at least one of~~ as a condition to causing said selection information to be stored in said storage unit and to causing said selection history information to be transmitted by said transmitter.

52. (previously presented) A broadcast-program selection history information acquisition apparatus as claimed in claim 51, further comprising a power-supply detection circuit operable to detect at least one of the loss of power to said broadcast-program selection history information acquisition apparatus and the restoration of power thereto after loss.

53. (previously presented) A broadcast-program selection history information acquisition apparatus as claimed in claim 52, wherein the power is alternating current (AC) power.

54. (previously presented) The broadcast-program selection history information acquisition apparatus as claimed in claim 51, further comprising a user application executable by said processor to acquire said selection information based on user selection input, wherein said processor is operable to initialize said user application in response to the restoration of power, said authorizing input being required for execution of said user application.